



International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology



Herpetological contributions of Edward Bartlett (ca. 1836-1908), pioneering herpetologist in Borneo

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Edward Bartlett (ca. 1836-1908) was the second Curator of the Sarawak Museum, Kuching between 1895-97, succeeding George Darby Haviland (1857-1901), and preceding Robert Walter Campbell Shelford (1872-1912). Nothing is known of his early life, except that he was presumably from England, and by May 1887, had taken up position of Superintendent of the London Zoo. Some correspondence between George Albert Boulenger (1858-1937), of the British Museum, Natural History, London, on the herpetology of Borneo did take place (see Wahlgren, 1999). Besides adding to the zoological collections of the museum, Bartlett also published in local journals during his all too brief tenure. An all-round naturalist, he published articles on mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and butterflies. His most important herpetological contribution was a 24-page account of the crocodiles and lizards of Borneo that were represented in the Sarawak Museum, including the description of seven new species of lizards (Bartlett 1895e; see Appendix 1).

Less well known is the fact that Bartlett also wrote a rather long series of papers in the "Sarawak Gazette", the monthly official gazette for the staff of the Sarawak Civil Service (many of whom generously donated specimens to the Museum), on turtles and tortoises (Bartlett 1894a, 1895a, 1895b, 1896b), amphibians (Bartlett 1894b) and snakes (Bartlett 1895c, 1895d, 1896a, 1896c). These were in the checklist format, annotated with locality records, sometimes with brief descriptions and natural

history trivia, and are important in being the first for Borneo that were primarily based on voucher specimens (Table 1). The geographical coverage was all of the island of Borneo, including the then Dutch-portion which is now Kalimantan of Indonesia, although Bartlett presumably examined specimens only from Sarawak.

While Bartlett published nearly all of his herpetological writings in the Gazette, these were reprinted in a self-edited book (Bartlett 1896d). Subsequent workers have cited both the primary literature (e.g., De Rooij 1915: 289, 292, 326) and the reprint (e.g., Brown & Alcalá 1994, Das 1998: 6, Inger 1966: 386, Wallach & Bauer 1997).

Three turtle species were described in his checklists in the Gazette. *Hardella baileyi* Bartlett (1895b) was promptly synonymised under *Orlitia borneensis* Gray, 1873 by Boulenger (1895) (current names listed in Appendix 1). Nonetheless, Bartlett continued to maintain the validity of his new species and even established a new genus, *Brookeia* Bartlett, 1896d, for it. Subsequent workers (including De Rooij 1915: 292) continued to treat *Hardella baileyi* Bartlett, 1895b as synonymous with *Orlitia borneensis* Gray, 1873. The second species, *Kachuga brookei* Bartlett (1895a) was synonymised under *Callagur borneoensis* (Schlegel & Müller 1844) by De Rooij (1915:289), and the third, *Trionyx pecki* Bartlett (1895a) under *Dogania subplana* (Geoffroy Saint-Hillaire 1809) by De Rooij (1915:326).